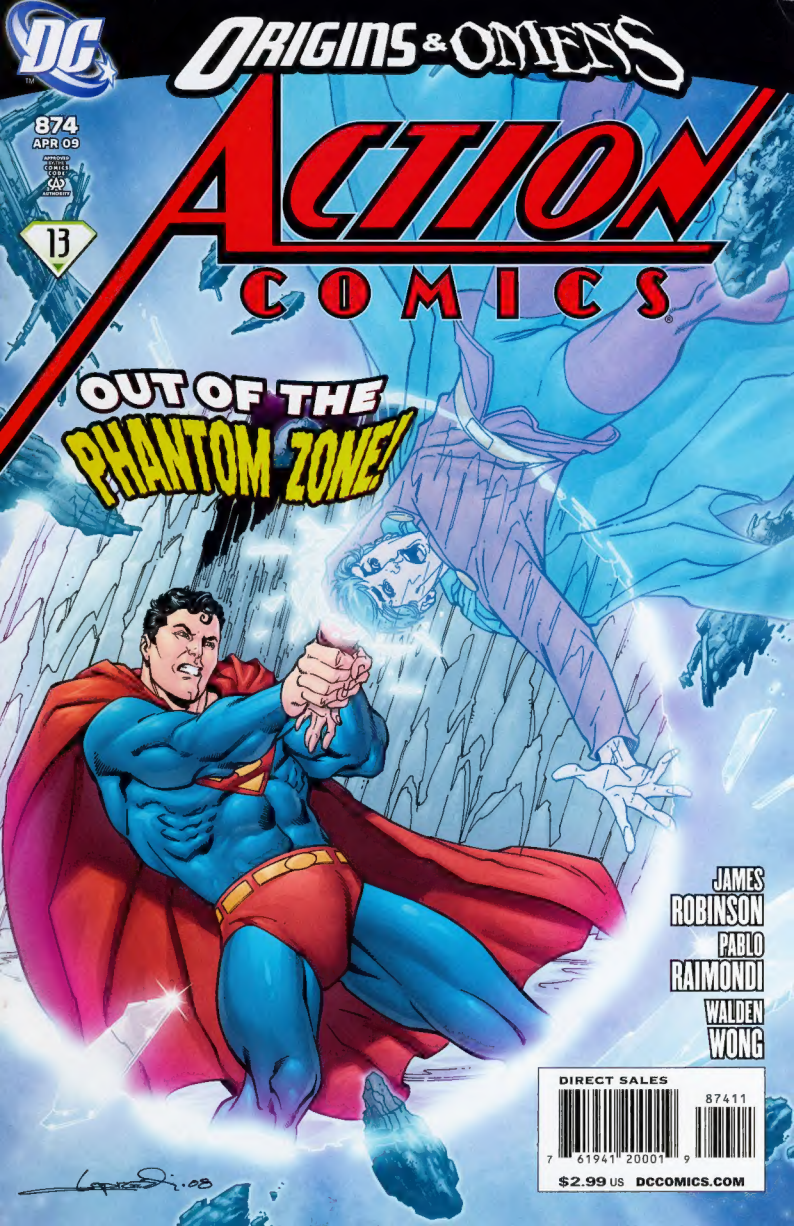
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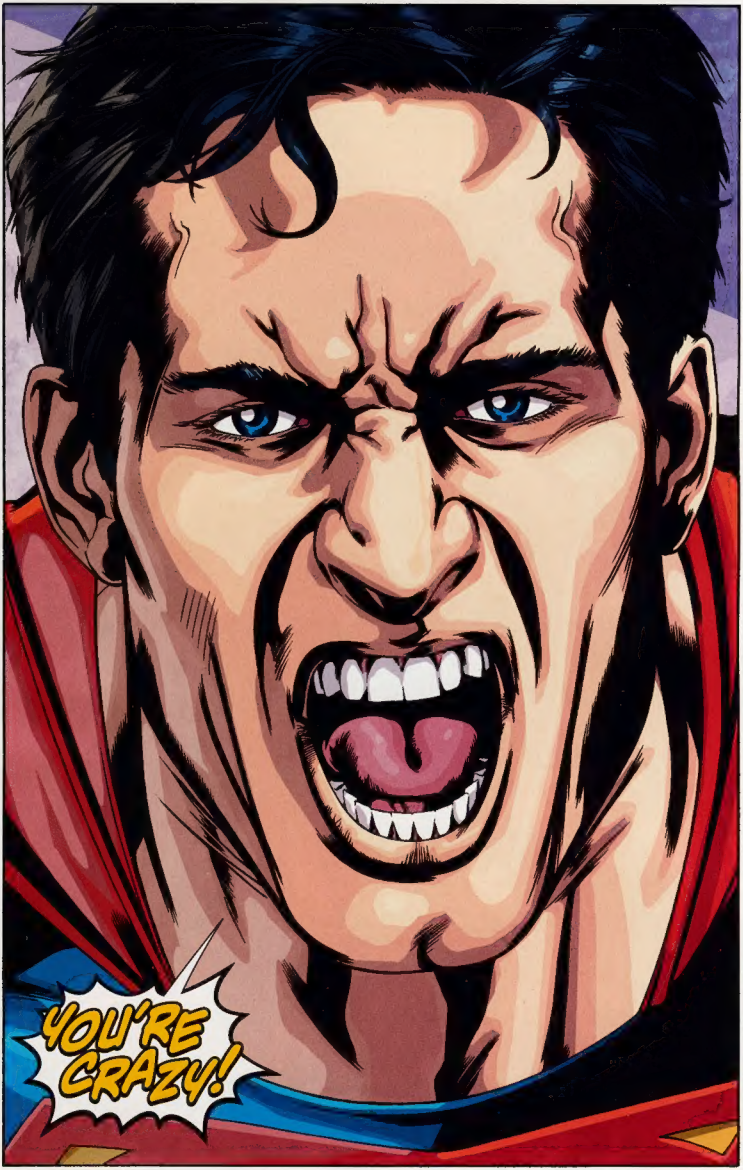
YOU'RE CRAZY!

HOW CAN YOU HARBOR ZOD?!
HOW CAN YOU TREAT HIM LIKE A HERO?!
HE'S A MONSTER!!

WE'VE REINED HIM IN, ZOD.
SO I SEE.
ALL RIGHT, ZOD, YOU HAVE ME. NOW WHAT?
NOTHING, KAL-EL. NOTHING AT ALL.
BUT DO YOU SEE, KAL-EL?
ON YOUR PRECIOUS LITTLE EARTH YOU MAY BE A SUPER MAN. HERE YOUR POWERS ARE NEGATED BY OURS. YOU'RE JUST LIKE ANY ONE OF US.
TIME WAS I WOULD HAPPILY HAVE SNAPPED YOUR NECK OR AT THE VERY LEAST SENT YOU INTO THE PHANTOM ZONE--WHERE YOU LEFT ME TO LANGUISH.
I'M LISTENING, ZOD. WHAT'S DIFFERENT NOW?
ME. I'M NO LONGER LOST TO MY PEOPLE. NOW I LEAD THEIR ARMY.

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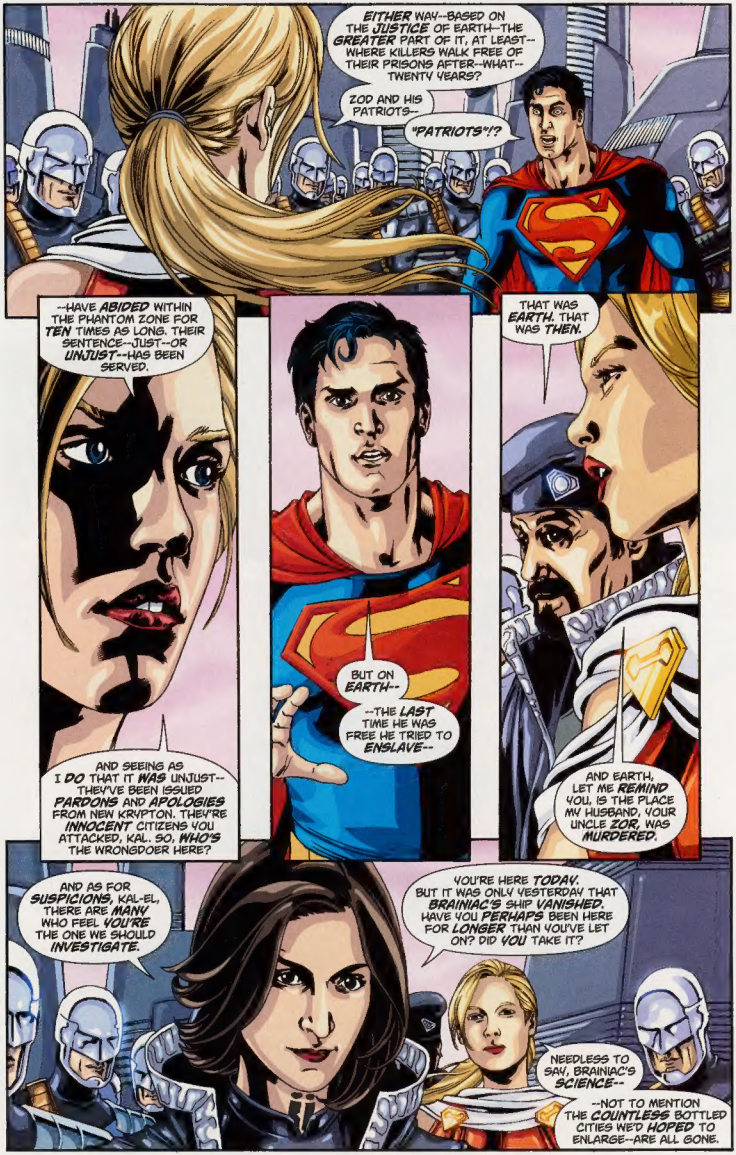
HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
ALURA, HOW CAN YOU CONDONE THIS? WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT ZOD'S UP TO SOMETHING?
NO, KAL. WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT HE ISN'T?
SHE'S RIGHT. I'M REALLY NOT.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT PUT HIM IN THE PHANTOM ZONE TO BEGIN WITH? PUNISHMENT FOR ATTACKING THE KRYPTONIAN HIGH COUNCIL.
AND HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHY?
THEY LOBOTOMIZED POOR NON, HERE.
THEY IGNORED THE WARNINGS OF JOR-EL, YOUR OWN FATHER, ABOUT THE LOOMING DESTRUCTION OF KRYPTON. HAD THEY HEEDED HIM--IF WE'D BUILT SPACE-ARCS--
--HOW MANY MORE OF OUR RACE WOULD LIVE NOW?
IN OTHER WORDS, NEPHEW, PERHAPS THE COUNCIL NEEDED ATTACKING.
PERHAPS IF ZOD'S GOALS HAD BEEN REALIZED, HE'D HAVE BEEN SEEN AS A HERO ALL THIS TIME AND NOT THE TERRORIST YOU PAINT HIM TO BE.


EITHER WAY--BASED ON THE JUSTICE OF EARTH--THE GREATER PART OF IT, AT LEAST--WHERE KILLERS WALK FREE OF THEIR PRISONS AFTER--WHAT--TWENTY YEARS?
ZOD AND HIS PATRIOTS--
"PATRIOTS"!?
--HAVE ABIDED WITHIN THE PHANTOM ZONE FOR TEN TIMES AS LONG. THEIR SENTENCE--JUST--OR UNJUST--HAS BEEN SERVED.
AND SEEING AS I DO THAT IT WAS UNJUST--THEY'VE BEEN ISSUED PARDONS AND APOLOGIES FROM NEW KRYPTON. THEY'RE INNOCENT CITIZENS YOU ATTACKED, KAL. SO, WHO'S THE WRONGDOER HERE?
BUT ON EARTH--
--THE LAST TIME HE WAS FREE HE TRIED TO ENSLAVE--
THAT WAS EARTH. THAT WAS THEN.
AND EARTH, LET ME REMIND YOU, IS THE PLACE MY HUSBAND, YOUR UNCLE ZOR, WAS MURDERED.
AND AS FOR SUSPICIONS, KAL-EL, THERE ARE MANY WHO FEEL YOU'RE THE ONE WE SHOULD INVESTIGATE.
YOU'RE HERE TODAY. BUT IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY THAT BRAINIAC'S SHIP VANISHED. HAVE YOU PERHAPS BEEN HERE FOR LONGER THAN YOU'VE LET ON? DID YOU TAKE IT?
NEEDLESS TO SAY, BRAINIAC'S SCIENCE--
--NOT TO MENTION THE COUNTLESS BOTTLED CITIES WE'D HOPED TO ENLARGE--ARE ALL GONE.

I HAVE NO IDEA--HAD NO PART--
AND I BELIEVE YOU, KAL. I KNOW YOU TO BE HONEST--INDEED, TO THE POINT OF WEAKNESS.
ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT. I SEE I'M NOT WANTED HERE.
HOW'S KARA, AT LEAST?
MY DAUGHTER IS FINE.
AND CHRIS?
MY SON--LOR-ZOD--IS NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN.
I'LL ASSUME HE'S SAFE, ZOD--FOR NOW.
BUT YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ONE THING, KAL. YOU ARE WELCOME HERE. THERE ISN'T A PERSON IN THE CITY WHO DOESN'T ACKNOWLEDGE THEY OWE THEIR FREEDOM TO YOU.
IN FACT, IT'S MY HOPE YOU'LL DECIDE TO COME AND LIVE HERE AMONG YOUR PEOPLE.

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I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ALURA.
SAY? TELL ME YOU'RE A KRYPTONIAN FIRST AND FOREMOST. TELL ME YOU RENOUNCE EARTH AND EVERYONE ON IT.
DO THAT SMALL THING AND YOU CAN RECLAIM YOUR BIRTHRIGHT--TO BE AS ONE WITH YOUR PEOPLE.
I --I-- NEED TO THINK.
GOODBYE, KAL. I HOPE I SEE YOU AGAIN.
AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I ECHO ALURA'S SENTIMENTS.
DO YOU THINK HE'LL RETURN?
WHO CAN SAY WITH THAT ONE?
EARTH'S PRIMITIVE CHARMS HOLD HIM IN ITS SWAY.
WHILE WE ARE IN THE GRIP OF A MYSTERY, ALURA. WHO TOOK BRAINIAC'S SHIP?...

"...AND WHERE IS IT NOW?"
I BROUGHT YOU A BELATED CHRISTMAS GIFT, LANE.
HMMM. WHY THANK YOU, LUTHOR...
7734
...I'LL ENJOY UNWRAPPING IT WITH YOU.
7734

DAILY PLANET
SHIRKING ON THE JOB, OLSEN. THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU.
7734
NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS, DOOFUS, BUT--
I'M NOT SHIRKING, MR. LOMBARD. I'M WORKING ON A STORY.
WHO'RE YOU KIDDING--
7734
I DID THAT STUFF WHEN I WAS A KID TOO.
E?!?--- WHAT STUFF?
WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG AND YOU GET A POCKET CALCULATOR--
--SEEING HOW MANY WORDS YOU CAN MAKE BY TURNING THE NUMBERS UPSIDE DOWN.
55179--BLISS. 0705--SOLO. 3907--LOBE. LOTS OF OTHERS TOO--
--LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE DOING THERE.
I DON'T GET YOU.
OLSEN, YOU ARE THE DOPIEST SO-N-SO I'VE EVER MET.
7734. TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN ON A POCKET CALCULATOR--
--IT SPELLS HELL.

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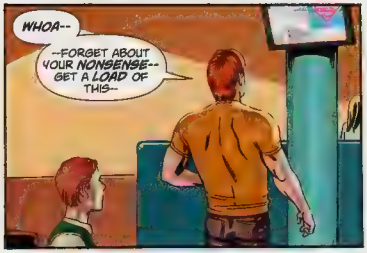
CLARK?
OH. HI.
WHEN DID YOU GET BACK?
FROM NEW KRYPTON? AN HOUR AGO. I'VE BEEN UP HERE THINKING.
THINKING? BROODING, MORE LIKE. THERE ARE PROBLEMS THERE, RIGHT?
YOU COULD SAY THAT. AND I KNOW I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING, I'M JUST NOT SURE EXACTLY--
I NEED TO BE ALONE WITH THIS. I NEED TO THINK.
I'LL LEAVE YOU TO THE NIGHT THEN. I UNDERSTAND, HONEY.
NO. I DON'T MEAN ALONE LIKE THAT. I JUST MEAN THAT I NEED SOLITUDE.
HERE--
--CLIMB ABOARD. WE'LL TAKE A TRIP TOGETHER.


WHOA--
--FORGET ABOUT YOUR NONSENSE-- GET A LOAD OF THIS--

NEWS JUST IN--AFTER A 12-HOUR CONVENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS, A RESOLUTION HAS BEEN PASSED BANNING ALL KRYPTONIANS FROM EARTH WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SUPERMAN. THIS WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AND TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIA--
LL WANTED FOR POLICE MURDERS IN METRO

LOOK.
I SEE.
COAST CITY.

YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?
UNFORTUNATELY, YEAH, I DO--
--THE CLOCK IS TICKING.
FOLLOW NIGHTWING AND FLAMEBIRD IN NEXT MONTH'S ACTION COMICS #875--MATT

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.
THIS IS KRYPTON, LOIS.
IT WAS ALL SO PERFECT IN MY IMAGINATION--EVEN THE AUSTERITY OF THE SCIENTISTS' GUILD FELT SOMEHOW COMFORTING.
BUT IN REALITY IT'S ALL SO DIFFERENT--MY PEOPLE ARE JUST MEN AND WOMEN WITH ALL THE FLAWS AND WEAKNESSES OF THOSE ON EARTH.
--THE KRYPTON I'VE KNOWN ALL THIS TIME.
THAT I REALIZE NOW IS JUST LIGHT SHONE THROUGH CRYSTAL.
WELL WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? "SUPERMEN"? BUT AT THE SAME TIME I CAN SEE IT'S THE IMPERFECTION OF THEM THAT DRAWS YOU BACK THERE, RIGHT?
THEY NEED ME, LOIS.
ZOD. I KNOW HE'S PLANNING SOMETHING.
HE'S BEEN GIVEN HIS FREEDOM, CLARK. HE'S BEEN PARDONED. THE VERY FACT THAT CROSSING THE LINE COULD GET HIM SENT BACK TO THE PHANTOM ZONE MIGHT BE ALL IT TAKES FOR HIM TO CHANGE.
YOU DIDN'T SEE THE LOOK IN HIS EYES, LOIS. A LOOK OF EVIL. NO--
ZOD HAS PLANS AND NONE OF THEM GOOD--NOT FOR KRYPTON OR FOR--
KAL!
HELP ME!
MON!

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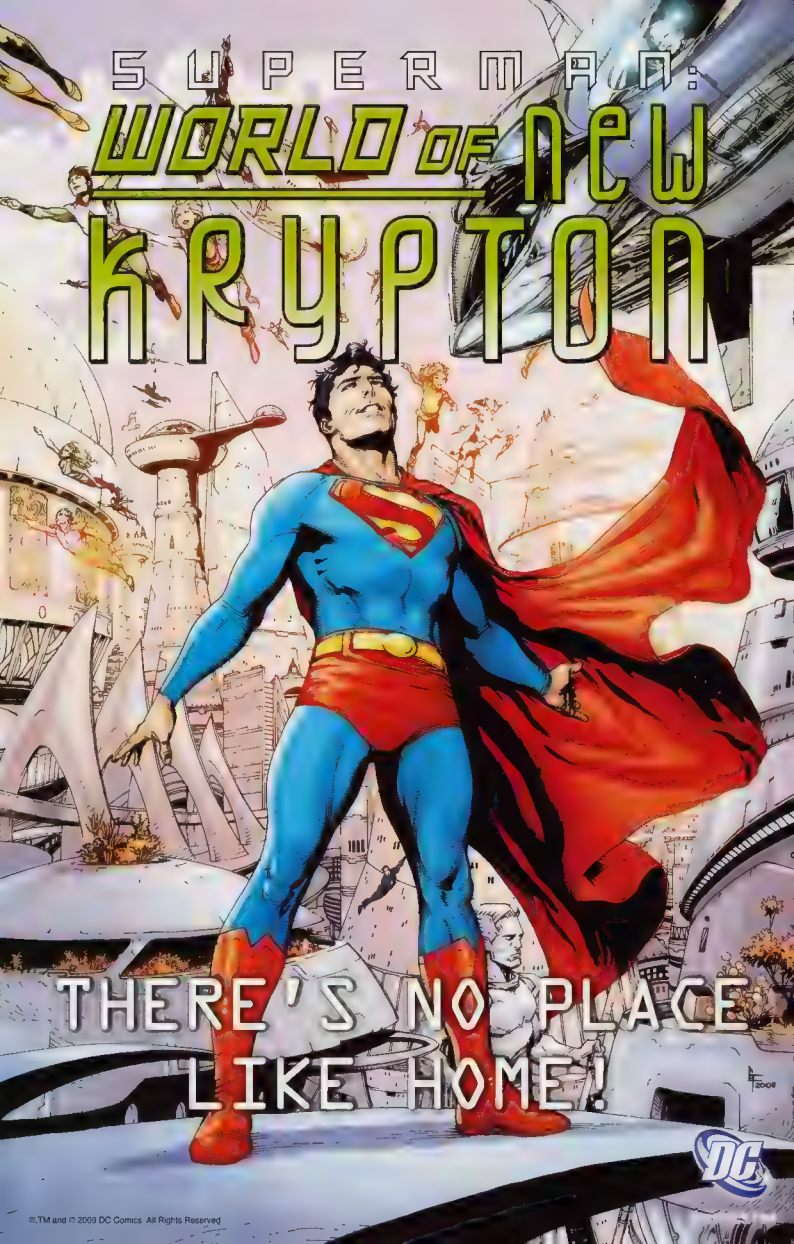
MON, WHAT IS IT?
THE PHANTOM ZONE--IT IS DISAPPEARING.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT IS BECOMING NOTHING--A VOID THAT IS SPREADING. THE CRIMINALS WHO ARE STILL HERE--THIS VOID HAS KILLED THEM. I'M ALL THAT IS LEFT.
THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME. LET ME OUT.
BUT YOU'LL DIE FROM THE LEAD IN THE AIR.
WELL, I WILL DIE IN HERE FOR SURE, AND IF I MUST DIE, I WOULD RATHER DO IT WITH YOU.

THIS HAS BEEN MY PRISON FOR SO LONG, I DON'T WANT IT TO END HERE TOO.
NOT LIKE THIS, KAL!
I DO NOT WANT TO DIE A PHANTOM!
LET ME OUT!

PLEASE, KAL.
LET ME OUT!
THANK YOU, KAL.



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NOW I CAN DIE A MAN.
TO BE CONTINUED IN
SUPERMAN #685

I AM SCAR OF OA, AND UNTIL HE COMES--
I WAIT.
AND I PREPARE WITH KNOWLEDGE LEARNED FROM THE BLACK BOOK.
I READ OF THOSE WITHIN IT--
I READ OF THEIR FEELINGS.
I READ OF THEIR FEARS.
ONE WITHIN THESE PAGES HAS DOUBTS.
SHE WAS ONCE A LOYAL MEMBER OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE, FOUNDERS OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS. BUT SINCE SHE BURNED AT THE HAND OF THE ANTI-MONITOR, HER SOUL ROTS WITH DARKNESS. UNBEKNOWNST TO HER FELLOW ORANS, HER LOYALTIES NOW LIE ELSEWHERE. THE GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE TAKE NO NAMES. YET SOON THIS ONE WILL BE KNOWN AS SCAR
HE HAS FEARS.
AND HE HAS LOVE.
ORIGINS & OMENS
JAMES ROBINSON
WRITER
RENATO GUEDES
PENCILLER
JOSÉ WILSON MAGALHÃES
INKER
DAVID CURIEL
COLORIST
ROB LEIGH
LETTERER
WIL MOSS
ASST. EDITOR
MATT IDELSON
EDITOR
JIM HARPER.
CLONE OF A MAN LONG DEAD.
HE TOOK BOTH THAT MAN'S NAME--
--HARPER, YES--
--BUT ALSO THE NAME THAT GOES ALONG WITH A MASK HE WEARS.
THE GUARDIAN.
A BRAVE MAN, TRUE--

--AND YET A MAN AFRAID.
I KEEP THE STOIC FACE. OF COURSE THE HELMET HELPS.
TODAY IS A BIG DAY, PEOPLE. AS I'M SURE AT LEAST SOME OF YOU ARE AWARE--
--IT'S THE TOYMAN'S BIRTHDAY, SO HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WINSLOW SCHOTT, AND MAY YOU ROT IN ARKHAM WHERE YOU CLEARLY BELONG.
I NEVER LET ON HOW SCARED I AM.
BUT DEEP DOWN I FEAR THE TRUTH--
HOWEVER, WHETHER HE'S IN OR OUT--ON HIS BIRTHDAY HE ALWAYS GENEROUSLY GIVES US A PRESENT--A TOY OF SOME KIND--OR TOYS--PRE-PROGRAMMED TO UNLEASH MAYHEM.
--IF INDEED IT IS THE TRUTH. AM I DOING THIS RIGHT?
NO NEWS OF ANYTHING SO FAR, BUT OBVIOUSLY THE DAY IS FAR FROM OVER, SO--
AM I DOING ENOUGH?
SIR!!
YES, MARKHAM? IS THIS IT?
DOWNTOWN. WE GOT A FULL SQUADRON OF MINIATURE P38 LIGHTNINGS STRAFING THE CITY WITH REAL BULLETS.
PLUS WE HAVE A 60-FOOT TEDDY BEAR FIRING EXPLOSIVE BLASTS FROM ITS BOWTIE. SEVENTEEN DEAD SO FAR.
ALL RIGHT, KIDDIES, YOU HEARD THE MAN AND YOU KNOW THE DRILL--

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"--SCRAMBLE!!"
LATER.
GOOD WORK TODAY, POLLOCK.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE FASTER IF YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE THROUGH ANOTHER ONE OF THESE.
COPY THAT, SIR.
FUNNY. DOWNTOWN--HERE. SUICIDE SLUM.
POW!
--WHERE THE MAN I WAS CLONED FROM, THE ORIGINAL JIM HARPER--THE ORIGINAL GUARDIAN--DID HIS THING.

COME TO THINK OF IT, WE'RE NOT TOO FAR FROM WHERE PROJECT CADMUS USED TO BE--
--WHERE I WAS BORN.
SO MUCH OF MY LIFE IS IN THIS CITY, MAKES ME THINK--
MAKES ME QUESTION EVEN MORE--
HAVE A GOOD NIGHT, SIR.
YEAH, YOU TOO, WILCOX. NICE THE WAY YOU SAVED THAT OLD MAN TODAY, HE'D HAVE BOUGHT IT WITHOUT YOU.
--AM I DOING THIS RIGHT?
I DIDN'T THINK YOU SAW THAT.
I SEE EVERYTHING, WILCOX.
YES, I'M DOING ENOUGH AS LEADER OF THE SCIENCE POLICE, I KNOW THAT--
HEY, SIR, SOME OF US ARE MEETING UP FOR A DRINK--
--BUT WHAT ABOUT AFTER WORK?
THANKS, BUT I'VE GOT THE LITTLE WOMAN WAITING FOR ME AT HOME.
AT HOME--AM I DOING ENOUGH AS A FATHER?

--WITH MY OWN LITTLE CLONE.
--MY OWN LITTLE GIRL.
GWEN.
HELLO, DADDY, HOW WAS WORK TODAY?
NOTHING TOO CRAZY, HOW WAS SCHOOL?
BILLY TUCKER TRIED TO BULLY ME.
YOU DIDN'T PUT HIM IN THE HOSPITAL LIKE THAT OTHER KID, I HOPE, YOUNG LADY.
NO, BUT HE PEED IN HIS PANTS AND EVERYBODY LAUGHED.
THAT'S MY GIRL.
COME ON, LET'S FIX DINNER.
HARPER LOVES THIS GIRL--

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--YET HE FEARS FOR HER.
AND HIS FEARS WILL BE REALIZED.
HE ALSO FEARS THAT BEING THE CLONE OF ANOTHER MAKES HIM LESS OF A MAN.
THESE TIMES TO COME--
HIS VALOR WILL BE TESTED IN THE TIMES TO COME.
--WHEN HARPER WILL KNOW ANGER--
--COURAGE--
--AND GRIEF.
SO IT IS WRITTEN.
AND SO IT WILL BE.
FOLLOW THE GUARDIAN'S ADVENTURES EVERY MONTH STARTING IN
SUPERMAN #686!

Black Adam! Isis! Dissension in the ranks! An uncertain future!

As you can see, there is a lot going on in JSA these days. Many of you are curious about what the future holds for the team, so we're going to shed some light on the situation this month.

As you probably know by now, JSA #23-25 features the return of the Black Marvel family in a major way. Written by **Geoff Johns** and **Jerry Ordway**, this tale features the epic confrontation between the JSA and Black Adam for control of the Rock of Eternity. By the end of this story there will be a new status quo for several characters, and the stage will be set for further events in 2009. This story has been a long time in the making and we're thrilled to bring it to you.

Up next is a very special issue of JSA. JSA #26 is the final issue of the series by the creative team of **Geoff Johns** and **Dale Eaglesham**. The passion and creative brilliance these two have brought to JSA over their run is nothing short of incredible. They have set a very high standard, which we will do our absolute best to maintain. This issue doesn't so much say goodbye as it does set the table for things to come. To commemorate the occasion, JLA #26 features not one, but three covers by **Alex Ross**. Please allow me to take this moment to thank Geoff, Dale and Alex on behalf of the entire DC Nation for all of their hard work on JSA.

So what's next? JSA #27 and 28 focus on the younger members of the team and are brought to you by our good friend Jerry Ordway. Then starting in issue #29, we're proud to introduce the new writing team of **Bill Willingham** and **Mathew Sturges**. You know these guys from the Fables universe, and they have something really special in store for their first arc on the series. Now, I can't give too much away, but we'll see new team members, lots of villains and the beginning of a mystery that will introduce one of the greatest threats the JSA has ever faced. It's going to be a wild ride, and trust me when I say that you're not going to see the end coming. Please help us in welcoming Mathew and Bill onboard.

As you can see, there are serious changes and challenges coming down the road for the JSA. Will the team survive intact? You're going to have to tune in to find out

—Ian.

NEXT IN...

SUPERMAN #685

This story concludes in two weeks in SUPERMAN #685, setting the stage for all the exciting changes coming to the Superman books , in March!

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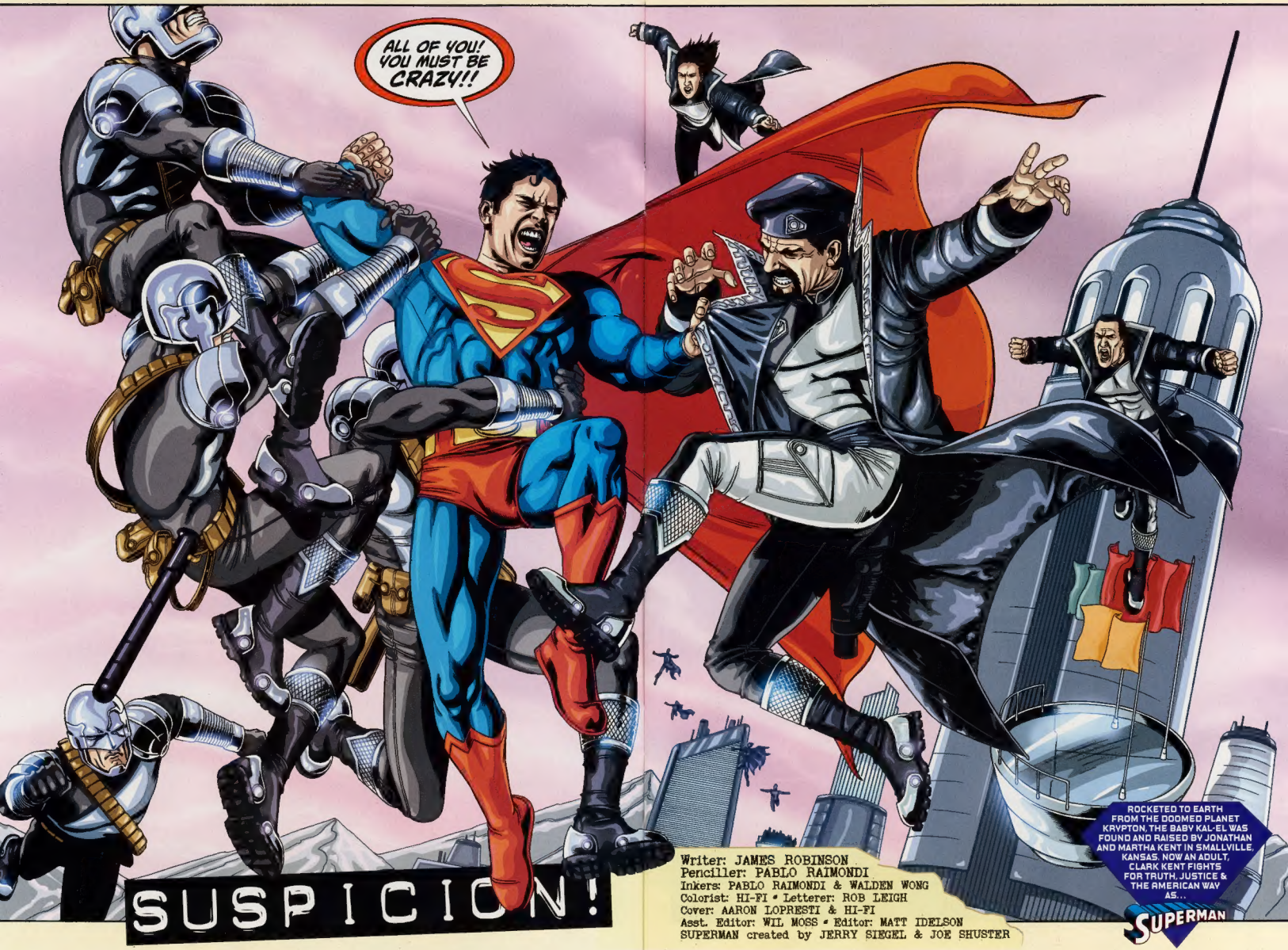

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Cover: AARON LOPRESTI & HI-FI
Asst. Editor: WIL MOSS • Editor: MATT IDELSON
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

ROCKETED TO EARTH FROM THE DOOMED PLANET KRYPTON, THE BABY KAL-EL WAS FOUND AND RAISED BY JONATHAN AND MARTHA KENT IN SMALLVILLE, KANSAS. NOW AN ADULT, CLARK KENT FIGHTS FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE & THE AMERICAN WAY AS...

SUPERMAN